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AUTHOR DiPardo, Anne
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ABSTRACT

Conducted at a public university that had long been overwhelmingly Anglo despite being located in a state noted for its linguistic and cultural diversity, an ethnographic study examined one adjunct writing program and the varied students it serves. Data sources were both numerous and varied--data were collected concurrently at the campus level and within the various layers of the program. Two concerns (about academic standards and about cultural separatism) emerged as campus administrators struggled to explain their mixed feelings about the "equity policy" (designed to promote the academic and social adjustment of underrepresented students). Tensions also surfaced repeatedly at the English department and the small-group leader levels. In interviews with writing program administrators, faculty, and small-group leaders about the role of the program, the same dilemmas surfaced again and again--Should small group leaders: (1) consider cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students as resources to be shared or as stumbling blocks to be overcome? (2) act as nondirective facilitators or as directive leaders? (3) provide nurturing, understanding support to students, or insistent, sometimes aggressive prodding? (4) understand that all students must be expected to approximate native-like proficiency, or consider such standards to be inappropriate to a linguistically diverse population? and (5) adopt a quizzical, reflective habit of mind, or offer specific strategies and techniques? The study offers two student portraits (a Latina and a Black male) that suggest some of the kinds of understandings that might have usefully informed the group leaders' work--understandings that extend beyond the urgency of the instructional moment to students' struggles to belong in the academy. (Ninety-five references are attached.) (RS)

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Anne DiPardo

May, 1992

University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720

Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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Nested Contexts: A Basic Writing Adjunct Program And the Challenge of "Educational Equity"

Anne DiPardo
The University of Iowa

At universities across the country, writing program administrators are confronting demographic change with good will but often insufficient resources, hastily refining programs ostensibly designed for "underprepared" or "basic" writers that they might better serve growing numbers of linguistic and cultural minority students. Dissuaded by the costliness of one-on-one tutorials, many are retraining student tutors to work with small groups, tentatively entertaining claims that this new configuration will offer not only "individualized instruction," but also opportunities for "collaborative learning." Meanwhile, the essential challenge remains unrevised, for both goals require that peer teachers be moved toward understandings of who these students are and what they need; to invoke the prevalent theoretic language, peer teachers must not only determine what sorts of individual support will be most helpful at any given moment, but continually calibrate their instructional "scaffolds" (Applebee & Langer, 1983, 1986; Bruner, 1978) to ensure a close fit with students' ever-evolving "zones of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978). To peel away the label of basic writer is to understand just how bafflingly varied this challenge is, particularly where students come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Working with these students on academic writing assignments requires insight into where they've been as well as where they're going—the ability, as current slogans would have it, to "build from what they bring," to "invite them into the academic conversation" in a way that honors their differences.

For many students from non-mainstream backgrounds, writing stands as a key gatekeeper to the academy; and as they struggle with the seemingly impersonal, elusive sorts of discourse peculiar to their new environment, small-group assistance from peers would seem to offer many benefits—opportunities to explore alternate points of view, to argue ideas, and to gauge the effects of one's written work in the presence of a comparatively non-threatening audience (Bruffee, 1984; Cazden, 1988; Hawkins, 1980). Such benefits are, however, far from automatic, particularly given the complexities of student needs and of the larger political matrix within which such programs are situated.

This study is an examination of one adjunct writing program[1] and of the varied students it served. Located at a traditionally white,[2] middle-class institution, these peer-taught small groups were among a host of campus programs designed to promote the academic and social adjustment of underrepresented students. Providing three weekly hours of additional assistance to students enrolled in the regular basic writing course, the program represented a key link in the campus's commitment to "educational equity"—defined in a recent amendment to the campus mission statement as "providing quality education to students who are from groups historically underrepresented in higher education," and to "meeting and addressing the needs of these students." Because talk about writing is saturated with meanings at once social and cognitive, the adjunct program provided a particularly clear vista onto the tensions which vexed both this and the larger effort, dramatizing the complexities of translating political ideals into substantive action.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

When writers experiment with academic discourse, they are doing more than trying on a linguistic disguise; they are experimenting as well with new identities, new ways of thinking and being (Bartholomae, 1985; Bizzell, 1986; Brodkey, 1987; Rose, 1989; Walvoord & McCarthy, 1991). Increasingly, theorists and researchers acknowledge that the linguistic challenges basic writers face are intricately connected to a broad web of cognitive, social, and affective concerns (Hull & Rose, 1989, 1990), that basic writers navigate not only between ways of using language, but, indeed, between worlds. In so doing, notes Harris (1989, p. 17), they negotiate among a "polyphony of voices"—the voices of their often linguistically and culturally different home communities, the typically impersonal voices of their textbooks and professors, and, increasingly, the voices of student instructors, alternately authoritative and informal.

Popularized by theorists invoking a social constructivist perspective on linguistic growth (see Bruffee, 1978, 1984), peer-teaching programs reflect the problematic challenge of meeting basic writers' diverse linguistic, social, and academic needs. Those who implement such programs have encountered a thin and somewhat confusing empirical literature, particularly with regards

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[1] Although members of the campus community called the small-group component of the basic writing course a "tutorial" program and its staff members "tutors," to avoid misleading associations with writing centers and one-on-one assistance, the terms "writing adjunct program" and "small-group leaders" will be used throughout.

[2] Acknowledging that groups traditionally termed "minorities" would soon comprise a majority of the state's population, system-wide administrators preferred the label "equity students," this despite the fact that these groups remained sorely underrepresented; in this report, I use that designation as well as the terms "non-mainstream," "ethnic minority," and "linguistic and cultural minority" students. Lacking more accurately descriptive and politically neutral terms, I use "Anglo" and "white" interchangeably to designate non-Hispanic whites.

to basic writers who are non-native speakers of English or who grew up speaking a stigmatized variety of the language. In many cases, these students' "individual needs" are only dimly understood by even the most "expert" among us; and as Valdés (1989) points out, given the paucity of research specifically targeting these populations, findings from studies conducted with Anglo students are often inappropriately generalized to linguistic minorities, further obscuring richly textured patterns of variation.

From a social-cognitive perspective, writing is enmeshed in contextual dynamics which not only shape its form and style, but also invest it with significance beyond the purely linguistic (Dyson & Freedman, 1990; Freedman, Dyson, Flower & Chafe, 1987). For minority students at predominantly white colleges, many of whom are away from familiar ethnic enclaves for the first time, the context of academic writing may be problematic indeed. Working with these students on writing assignments often requires an understanding of the complex interplay of group tendencies and individual differences, as well as insight into the political dilemmas—rooted in both the academic enterprise and the society at large—which attend their linguistic negotiations.

As the relatively low achievement levels and high attrition rates among some of our fastest-growing ethnic groups are chronicled by study after study (e.g., Astin, 1982; the California State Department of Education, 1982, 1985; Center for Education Statistics, 1986; Kaufman & Dolman, 1984; National Commission on Secondary Education for Hispanics, 1984), theorists and researchers have countered the "cognitive-deficit" or "cultural deprivation" thinking of sixties researchers (e.g., Bereiter & Engelmann, 1966; Deutsch et al., 1967; Hess & Shipman, 1965; Jensen, 1969) with explanations that acknowledge this webbing of the linguistic, social, and academic. Sociolinguistic research, for example, has depicted some of the ways in which patterns of language use in speech communities outside of school can conflict with the patterns expected in the classroom, thereby producing patterns of discontinuity said to contribute to teachers' tendencies to cast students' differences as deficiencies (e.g., Hymes, 1972, 1974; Mehan, 1978, 1980, 1987; and Philips, 1972, 1982). Meanwhile, anthropologist John Ogbu (1974, 1978, 1979, 1982, 1985, 1987) has proposed an alternate explanation emphasizing minority populations' differential perceptions of access to the labor market. Distinguishing between "caste" and "immigrant" groups, Ogbu maintains that "caste-like" groups such as Hispanics and African Americans are unlikely to view schooling as a pathway to gainful employment; further, he maintains, children from these groups often see academic success as aligned with the adoption of a "white frame of reference," and therefore "prefer peer solidarity to schoolwork"—a tendency said to increase as these "caste-like" students move through the educational system (1987, pp. 332-3).

Erickson (1987) notes that while both the cultural mismatch and differential labor market arguments present plausible explanations, Ogbu's rather deterministic perspective underestimates the role of educators in promoting a more productive classroom experience for members of "caste"

groups. The key, Erickson maintains, is to avoid calling attention to difference in a negative way, to abandon "hegemonic" classroom practices and thereby convert politically charged "borders" into neutralized "boundaries" (p. 351). In terms of linguistic growth, minority students must be encouraged to perceive the adoption of English (or the mainstream variety thereof) as "additive" rather than "subtractive" (Cummins, 1986; Lambert, 1977), to acquire the metalinguistic ability to reflect in a dispassionate manner upon the differences between community and classroom language (Heath, 1983, 1986).

Many believe that such change can be accomplished in part by a decentralization of power and increasing reliance upon "collaborative learning"—arguments often buttressed with reference to empirical evidence that some minority students feel more at home in learning environments emphasizing peer networking (e.g., Labov 1982; Philips, 1972, 1982). Although research on teacher-student conferences (e.g., Beach, 1986; Freedman, 1981; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Sperling & Freedman, 1987; Sperling, 1990) and peer response groups (e.g., Freedman, 1992; Gere & Abbott, 1985; Gere & Stevens, 1985; Nystrand, 1986) has begun to suggest how the familiar Vygotskian rationale can be enacted in specific teaching-learning interactions (see Vygotsky, 1978; also discussed by DiPardo & Freedman, 1988), "collaborative learning" remains a rubric perched with precarious authority over a broad array of programs. Educators, argues Erickson (1989, p. 431) are currently in the grips of a "crush on collaboration" which must be tempered by critical consideration of why and how it might be appropriate in particular instances.

By examining the role of purportedly "collaborative" interactions in fostering the academic writing of linguistic minority students, the present study begins to address several significant gaps in the existing literature; further, by considering the larger contexts of these teaching-learning encounters, the study seeks to situate the rationales of the program—i.e., fostering "collaborative learning" and "meeting the needs of non-mainstream students"—within the socio-political matrix in which they were embedded. Examining not only the small-group interactions but also the basic writing program and campus "educational equity" mission of which they were an integral part, this research is predicated upon a belief that specific interactions cannot be understood apart from the contexts that shape and define them—contexts which are, as Cazden (1988, p. 198) points out, inevitably "nested."

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the larger social contexts in which the basic writing adjunct program is situated—i.e., at the level of the campus, the community in which it is located, and the university system of which it is a part? What tensions and controversies characterize the campus's efforts to promote "educational equity"?

2. What is the nature of the more immediate social context in which the program is situated—i.e., at the level of the English department, as perceived from the points of view of the writing program directors, adjunct component coordinators, and instructors?

What kind of initial training and continuing support do the small-group leaders receive? What tensions and controversies characterize efforts to institute the adjunct program?

3. How do the small-group leaders envision their task? How do they perceive their roles, and how do they define the purpose of the adjunct program? What are their perspectives upon linguistic and cultural diversity? What tensions and conflicts characterize these perspectives, and how do these relate to campus-wide or departmental tensions and conflicts?

4. What is the nature of the kinds of struggles these ethnically diverse students face as they attempt to adjust at once to the demands of academic life and to a nearly all-white social environment? What is the nature of the responses they receive from the small-group leaders? How do students characterize these struggles? How do the small-group leaders characterize them?

METHODS

This study's objectives—to consider particular instructional interactions from multiple points of view, and to locate these interactions within layers of institutional context—strongly suggested an ethnographic approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Erickson, 1986; Erickson, Florio, & Buschman, 1980). As detailed in the following discussion, the research site and subjects were selected in the interests of developing a finely textured, richly contextualized portrait of efforts to meet the needs of non-mainstream students, and data consisted primarily of informants' own words—in interviews, small-group sessions, and informal encounters.

Research Setting and Subjects

Located in a state noted for its linguistic and cultural diversity, the public university where data were collected had long been overwhelmingly Anglo—as had its immediate environs, a suburban community populated mainly by middle-class whites. With urging from state headquarters, campus administrators had recently introduced a host of programs designed to enhance equity-student recruitment and retention—some attempting to promote inter-cultural understandings or encourage ethnic pride, others (like the basic writing program and its adjunct component) targeting specific academic areas deemed likely obstacles for students from non-mainstream backgrounds. The campus was chosen as a research site because its process of transition seemed both complex and rather ordinary; by turns blessed and cursed with a modest array of strengths and weaknesses, triumphs and perplexities, it faced the challenge of becoming a multicultural institution with unremarkable, somewhat uneven resources.

So that I might depict the larger political contexts which informed the writing adjunct program, I interviewed a number of influential administrators about the campus's new "educational equity" mission, teasing

out their perceptions of the tensions and controversies attending the policy. Further, in order to explore the more immediate context of the small-group sessions, I also interviewed a number of individuals within the writing program (past and present composition directors, the entire basic writing teaching staff, and past and present adjunct coordinators[3]). The basic writing program on this campus was a two-tiered effort—a lower-level course was offered by a developmental education program (the "Comprehensive Learning Project"), while a second-semester course was supervised by the English department; so that I might observe the relationships between these layers, I interviewed staff who were involved with both courses, and followed a section of the English department course which served exclusively students who had just completed the first-semester CLP course.

Believing that "best-case scenarios" would provide the clearest lens, I elected to follow staff who were reflective of the adjunct program as a whole, but who were also deemed particularly effective in their work. I focused upon the small groups associated with a course section taught by Ms. Martin,[4] an instructor who had taught both the English department and CLP course; although she was widely regarded as one of both programs' most effective instructors, her approach to teaching basic writing was also fairly representative (an initial series of personal essay assignments segued into increasingly expository, analytic tasks), as was her tendency to allow her group leaders a great deal of freedom to use the adjunct hour as they saw fit. While the small-group leaders assigned to Ms. Martin's section were likewise considered to be among the program's best, they charted markedly different approaches to their task. The four focal students also provided lively contrasts—balanced in terms of gender and personality (two were female, two male; two were reserved, two outgoing), and presenting a rich array of linguistic backgrounds and orientations to writing.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

Summarized in Table 1, data sources were both numerous and varied—this in the interests of compiling a fine-grained picture comprised of various individuals' points of view, and to help correct any biases I brought to my initial observations (Erickson, 1986; Goetz & Lecompte, 1984). Data were collected concurrently at the campus level and within the various layers of the writing program; indeed, the one came to inform the other, since my list of campus-level informants grew and changed as I observed small-group

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[3] The adjunct coordinator was a part-time position staffed by a succession of upper-division and graduate students. An experienced group leader, the coordinator was typically appointed for one year to assist the composition director with the administrative details of running the small-group component of the basic writing program. Periodically, the coordinator also became involved in resolving disputes or offering guidance to novice staff members.

[4] Pseudonyms are used for all research participants.

Table 1
Data Collection Record

At the campus level

- *Audiotaped interviews* with administrators who played various roles in promoting "educational equity" on the campus (the Director of a campus-wide tutorial program; the EOP Director, the CLP Director, the Dean of Academic Studies; the Dean of Student Affairs; the Associate Dean for Student Life; and the Academic Vice President). *Total:* 7
- *Audiotapes of campus events* relating to cultural diversity (e.g., lectures, addresses, and workshops). *Total:* 4
- *Newspaper articles* relating to campus equity issues. *Total:* 30

At the level of the English department

- *Audiotaped interviews* with the present composition director, two past composition directors, four basic writing instructors, the present adjunct coordinator, and a past adjunct coordinator. *Total:* 9

At the level of the adjunct program

- *Beginning- and end-of-term interviews* with the classroom teacher, two focal group leaders, and four focal students. *Total:* 14
- *Audiotapes of the focal students' regular basic writing class* (all class sessions for the first three weeks of the semester, then one session per week for the duration). *Total:* 24
- *Audiotapes of all the focal adjuncts' small-group sessions* (three hours per week for each) from 2/90-5/90 *Total:* 66
- *Semester-long teaching journals* (in which adjuncts reflected upon their work, particularly with focal students). *Total:* 2
- *Audiotapes of adjunct staff meetings* (an administrative meeting at the beginning of the semester, two trouble-shooting sessions during the first weeks of the semester, and Ms. Martin's meeting with the focal adjuncts). *Total:* 4
- *Photocopies of all drafts of each assignment* for each of the focal students. *Total:* 57
- *Focal students' journals* (compendiums of freewrites and informal class assignments). *Total:* 4
- *Placement exam scores* for each focal student. *Total:* 4
- *Background questionnaires* completed by each focal student. *Total:* 4
- *Instructor's final evaluations* on each focal student. *Total:* 4

Other data sources

- Statistical information regarding campus demographics and programs (obtained from the Dean of Administrative Services).
- Fieldnotes (of course lectures, adjunct staff meetings, and informal encounters with various participants);
- Fieldwork journal (a more subjective, reflective account of my observations).

leaders and students, conducted initial interviews, and began to understand the larger political web within which the adjunct program was embedded.

At the campus level, to answer the first research question, I relied upon interviews as a primary data source. Interview protocols varied with each informant's area of expertise; all were asked about the campus's efforts to accommodate its emerging diversity, the role of their particular offices, and about specific programs, especially the writing adjunct. In each case, informants were asked to answer all the questions on my protocols, but also were allowed to digress.

To answer the remaining research questions concerning the program itself, I first audiotaped and observed both small-group leaders' thrice-weekly sessions over an entire semester. In order that I might be as unobtrusive as possible, I dropped off audiorecorders at the beginning of each session and situated myself in a corner of the room where I could visually observe group interactions and note students' comings and goings. I also collected beginning- and end-of-term interviews with the small-group leaders, focal students, and classroom teacher. All were asked for their perceptions of the efficacy of the adjunct program, and more broadly, their perceptions of the challenges before ethnic minority students at this predominantly white institution. The small-group leaders and teacher were asked about their philosophies of instruction, their understandings of the instructional needs of the focal students, and their efforts to meet these needs; students were asked about their own perceptions of their needs and of the effectiveness of the class and adjunct component. In end-of-term interviews with focal students and small-group leaders, segments of small-group audiotapes were played back, and interpretations and responses solicited. These segments were selected for stimulated recall because they indicated pivotal moments or highlighted issues or themes that ran consistently through the small-group leaders' and students' work over the semester (on the uses of stimulated recall in composition research, see DiPardo, forthcoming; and Rose, 1984). In order to situate the small-group interactions within the activities of the students' basic writing course, I also attended the whole-class segment regularly, audiotaping and taking fieldnotes; additionally, I attended and audiotaped all adjunct program staff meetings, and conducted audiotaped interviews with members of the department who had been involved in various ways with designing and/or supervising the program.

A number of additional data sources supplemented these small-group and interview audiotapes. Throughout the semester, factual records of meetings, informal encounters with various research participants, whole-class sessions, etc., were recorded in *fieldwork notes*. I also kept a *fieldwork journal*—defined by Spradley (1980, p. 71) as a more subjective record of "experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems." Besides providing an outlet for reflecting upon unresolved questions and dilemmas arising over the course of data collection, the journal became a record of my personal biases and responses, and was also helpful in documenting my role

and effects (using Spradley's [1980] taxonomy, my level of participation could be characterized as "moderate").

Data Analysis

All interview tapes were reviewed within a week; these were fully transcribed, with italicized notations of my responses and interpretations. Soon after small-group audiotapes were recorded, I reviewed them and compiled detailed notes and/or transcriptions. Group tapes were normally reviewed the same day they were collected, my notes consisting of a summary of visual observations and group attendance, detailed accounts of each group's discussion, italicized notations of my responses and interpretations and, often, transcriptions of passages that seemed particularly pertinent to my research questions.

Over time, I combed repeatedly through the total data set to identify key themes and patterns of tension that had repeatedly emerged as salient (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Spradley, 1980). As I sifted through my interviews with campus administrators, for instance, I identified two prevalent tensions (i.e., strong support for the equity policy tempered by worries about ethnic separatism and academic standards); once I had identified this pattern, I went back over the interview transcripts to collect all relevant statements, and then selected several that seemed particularly clear and representative. To be sure of the stability of the pattern, I made repeated passes through the total data set searching for any disconfirming evidence or counterexamples. I went through a similar process in analyzing data at the levels of the writing program and adjunct program, identifying five tensions which ran through the statements of staff at both levels. Finally, I combed through my data on each focal student, identifying information about cultural and linguistic background, their struggles with writing, their group leaders' responses, and the students' own perspectives on the small-group sessions.

In the end, I was able to pull from multiple data sources to discuss each issue or theme, supporting all conclusions with detailed reference to the perspectives of various informants, to particular instructional interactions, to student writing, or to background statistical data. Although these interpretations are well-supported for this particular setting, their external validity ultimately rests upon the readers' ability to "generalize personally to their own situations" (McCutcheon, 1981)—to locate comparable patterns of reflection upon their own contexts, and to discover fresh directions of inquiry and discussion (Merriam, 1988; Walker, 1980).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

"Educational Equity" and Campus Tensions

> Research Question One: What is the nature of the larger social contexts in which the writing adjunct program is situated—i.e., at the level of the campus, the community in which it is located, and the university system of which it is a part? What tensions and controversies characterize the campus's efforts to promote "educational equity"?

Although administrators were quick to point out that faculty were united in their formal support of the equity mission, all described a campus committed to diversity on a rhetorical level, but reluctant to confront the thorny complexities of translating these good intentions into efficacious action. The chair of an educational equity committee recalled that accord was unanimous when the campus mission statement had recently been amended to reflect a new commitment to "providing quality education to students who are from groups historically underrepresented in higher education," and to "meeting and addressing the needs of these students." On the other hand, he was quick to point out, while no one overtly opposed the new educational equity policy, neither did faculty feel particularly implicated in enacting it: "The campus community, for the most part, says educational equity belongs over there, and they point to [the Student Services building]," he noted, adding that many faculty members seemed to think they "don't particularly have anything to do with that." He complained that his own attempts to encourage faculty involvement were typically met by "compassionate but blank stares," or by simplistic insistence that "I'm not a bigot—I treat all my students the same."

As campus administrators struggled to explain their mixed feelings about the new equity policy, two tensions emerged as repetitive motifs:

Concerns about academic standards

Officially targeting students of any ethnicity who had received low scores on English and math placement exams, the Comprehensive Learning Project (CLP) served the highest concentration of underrepresented students of any academic program on campus; although in most semesters around half the students it served were white, the CLP was perennially referred to as a "key equity effort." The CLP's Director held a certain ambivalence about this perception—a pride in the importance of her program's work, but misgivings that such efforts were perceived as "taking care of the equity issue":

> Over and over we have said, "the educational equity effort—it's not me, it's not [the Director of EOP], it's not the special programs." We can't do it! ... It has to be much bigger than that, it has to be diffused through the whole university, if you're really serious about the effort ... we're all gonna go down the tube or we're all gonna fly—there's no way around it, I mean everything's too interrelated, too interconnected.

The two top-ranking academic officials interviewed for this study (the Academic Vice President and the Dean of Academic Affairs) observed that among a large percentage of faculty, the CLP had come to represent the more worrisome aspects of educational equity—the reality that many ethnic minority students were arriving underprepared for university-level work, in need of special support to bolster not only their academic proficiencies, but also their study habits and motivation. Faculty, they noted, often referred to the work of the CLP as "handholding," "bird-dogging," a "parenting kind of activity" that didn't quite belong at the university. Indeed, I would hear such borrowings from the language of popular psychology again and again in conversations with faculty, as they warned of the "co-dependency" such programs might engender and urged recognition of students' existential "right to fail." Despite the fact that the majority of the campus's "underprepared" students were Anglo, many saw the growing crisis in academic standards as inextricably tied to the equity mission. The campus must give "a totally different kind of attention to these people than the normal, run-of-the-mill student," noted the Dean of Academic Programs, adding that while innovations like the CLP may be "a tough thing to sell to many of the faculty ... on the other hand, we have to do a lot of different things that will improve the minority representation."

Concerns about cultural separatism

Although "caste" groups remained a rather tiny minority—as data collection commenced, Hispanics comprised around 5% of the total student body and African-Americans around 3%—ethnic separatism had likewise become an abiding concern among faculty and administrators. A member of the English Department reflected the widespread worry that ethnic clubs presented a threat to the campus social climate:

> I'm an old-fashioned integrationist. And one of the problems I see on this campus [as elsewhere] ... is the reluctance of minority groups to integrate, that they isolate themselves as a block and as a group. They own certain tables in the cafeteria, they congregate at certain places in the library. That's territorial. For example, there's a black student fraternity on campus. If I started a white student fraternity I'd be run off the grounds. So there's a certain inequity there that I think is preventing an amalgamation of the races on campus.

As the campus remained overwhelmingly Anglo, the Directors of the EOP and CLP noted that there were many reasons for this failure to "amalgamate"—including the need to retain a strong sense of ethnic identity in an atmosphere that often seemed both alien and threatening.

Periodically, an underlying uneasiness was rendered salient by crises or controversies that highlighted the enduring mistrust between the larger community and non-Anglo students. In the fall of 1989, for example, a group of Hispanic and African-American students conducted a peaceful downtown march to protest a newspaper article which had suggested that campus equity

students were urging local youth to join street gangs; some months later, African-American students gathered in the campus quad to burn copies of the campus newspaper containing an editorial cartoon they regarded as racist. For a time, such events stripped away the campus's harmonious veneer, accentuating concerns about ethnic separatism, and producing a barrage of hard-edged public rhetoric. Soon after the paper-burning, for instance, the Editor of the school newspaper termed it "an unacceptable act of censorship," and in the weeks that followed, ran a number of letters and articles filled with angry accusations—including the charge that the Black Student Union was a haven for "hysteria-driven fanatics."

Meanwhile, the university remained under increasing pressure to recruit and retain greater numbers of equity students. Indeed, this campus's accrediting commission had recently begun to assess institutions' progress toward multiculturalism, holding that today's students will be entering a world "that has no majority" (Weiner, 1990, p. B1). If few members of the campus community were disputing such goals in principle, many were discovering that translating them into effective practice was quite another matter.

The Basic Writing Curricula: Good Intentions and Enduring Ambivalence

> Research Question Two: What is the nature of the more immediate social context in which the program is situated—i.e., at the level of the English department, as perceived from the points of view of the writing program directors, adjunct component coordinators, and instructors? What kind of initial training and continuing support do these small-group leaders receive? What tensions and controversies characterize efforts to institute the adjunct program?

Set in place a few years earlier after long and often heated debate, the campus's basic writing program was beset by variations on the campus tensions over academic standards and cultural separatism—concerns translated, in this case, into more specific questions of how to define equity students' instructional needs, and how to prepare group leaders to provide appropriate support. The professor who had directed freshman composition at the time the program was introduced noted that while an influx of underprepared, linguistically diverse students had made the need apparent, most faculty maintained deep misgivings about "getting into the remediation business." When it became clear that yet another level of such assistance was needed, he recalled, the English Department "wouldn't touch it," regarding such a course as "an added burden," "a really separate category." Seen as particularly targeting ethnic minority students, an additional basic writing tier was eventually placed under the auspices of the newly created CLP, which hired its own teachers and small-group leaders; the second-semester course remained in the English department, a few sections set aside each semester to

receive those students "graduating" from the first-semester CLP course.[5] Though the arrangement had gradually gained reluctant acceptance, English department faculty continued to regard the basic writing program as a necessary evil. Regular professors almost never taught either course, handing over these responsibilities to temporary part-timers and, increasingly, upper-division and graduate English majors.[6]

A key gatekeeper (upon failing it a second time, students were academically disqualified), the English Department's basic writing course represented an important link in the campus's equity efforts. Since the course enrolled relatively high numbers of equity students, it also represented an opportunity for the department's faculty and majors (almost all of whom were Anglo) to encounter the complexities of linguistic and cultural diversity. The adjunct program's "collaborative learning" rubric shone with particular promise—that, as these "more expert peers" and their would-be protégés explored one another's culturally shaped ways with words, they would come away with enriched understandings of linguistic difference and the social nature of written discourse. As with the campus-wide equity effort, however, such goals were more easily articulated than realized. While the adjunct program was informed by many of the same good intentions that had prompted a recent amendment to the campus mission statement, it, too, was characterized by patterns of uncertainty and conflict.

As I interviewed and spoke informally with writing program administrators, faculty, and small-group leaders about the role of the adjunct program, the same dilemmas surfaced again and again:

Tension #1: Adjuncts should understand that the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of "caste" groups present (a) resources to be shared and strengths from which to build, or (b) stumbling blocks to be overcome.

Expressing an abiding concern with equity students' levels of preparation and attitudes toward mainstream English, both the program's founder and its current administrator suggested that one function of the adjunct component was to help students assimilate into the academic status quo. The professor who had helped institute the program noted that the small groups had been "pretty effective" early on, when they had served a smalier concentration of equity students from poorer inner-city neighborhoods: "People who came in, usually didn't have severe problems, severe handicaps in their backgrounds," he explained, "so small-group work as a supplement to their program seemed to be working." He suspected that was less and less the case, however, as the

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[5] As indicated earlier, this was the case with the course section followed in this research: it was a second-semester course administered by the English department, but was comprised exclusively of CLP students who had just completed a first-semester basic writing course.

[6] Two years after completion of data collection for this study, the department responded to growing fiscal pressures by turning over all sections of the second-semester basic writing course to graduate-student instructors.

campus "began to experience the range of population of some of the city campuses."

"Most of the students in the CLP sections are minority, it's natural," noted a past adjunct coordinator, echoing the common tendency to associate inadequate writing proficiency with membership in a non-Anglo community. Many of these students were both underprepared and lacked "adequate socialization into the English-speaking culture," observed the Dean of Academic Programs. In adjunct staff meetings, the composition director often referred to them as "remediable" students, the intended note of hopeful humor scarcely concealing his accord with the campus-wide concern over standards. One basic writing instructor put it more bluntly:

> They were unfortunately educated. Whether they never heard what they should have heard, prior to college, or whether they resisted learning, or whether they were so confused or you know, cut school, or what, in high school, they are slenderly educated. They are *ignorant*. These young people are ignorant of the English language in its written form ... if they would only forget their feelings about written English and learn it and do it, they would be so much happier.

Meanwhile, a controversial African-American professor who once directed the program emphasized the need to move the campus beyond its deficit model of cultural and linguistic diversity, to encourage both teachers and small-group leaders to build from the discourses equity students have already mastered. Two of the basic writing teachers had begun to move in just that direction, and were working to similarly enlighten the small-group leaders assigned to their sections. One, for instance, had asked some of her African-American students to use the small-group time to assemble a class lesson and subsequent paper on black English (one of the students later remarked that while she'd always thought of her native variety of the language as "bad English," the exercise had helped change her own mind). Another instructor saw the groups as an arena for student leaders to learn about the complexities of linguistic and cultural diversity—lessons which, in many cases, the faculty were yet to master: "It's a real challenge to see these people as individuals," she noted, adding that faculty must be encouraged to see that "these are wonderful people with wonderful stories, and if given a chance, they can tell those stories on a very high level."

Tension #2: Small-group leaders should act as (a) nondirective facilitators, encouraging students to work with one another on writing, or (b) directive leaders, maintaining a firm hold on group dynamics.

Although administrators and instructors often spoke of the small groups as opportunities for students to work with one another as well as with an adjunct staff member, most also revealed a concern that, in the words of the adjunct coordinator, the peer dynamic may devolve into "the blind leading the blind." One teacher observed that basic writers are typically so worried about offending one another that they seldom offer any feedback at all. When

she'd provided written guidelines to nudge students toward more explicit peer response, she noted their still "superficial" feedback: "Like if it's an exemplification essay, I'll ask, 'did the writer give three good examples?' and I'll get back, 'yes, three good examples'" (cf. the comments of an instructor studied by Freedman, 1987 and 1992; for a critical discussion of response checklists, see DiPardo & Freedman, 1988).

Always lurking beneath the surface of such observations are fundamental questions of audience, meaning, and purpose—that is, for whom are students writing, and to what end? Should peers be allowed to respond as peers, describing their spontaneous reactions to a piece of writing, or are they to mimic the way a teacher might respond? As various individuals addressed these concerns, they revealed not only their perspectives on what it means to foster "collaborative learning," but, indeed, on what it means to nurture the composing processes of these diverse students. Those who saw these basic writers as having deficient "skills" often believed that the small-group leaders should act as much as possible as surrogate teachers: the purpose of the adjunct program, noted one instructor, is "to take the burden of teaching composition from scratch off of the instructor." Another instructor believed that the group leaders should encourage students' "conversation, talk about papers," jumping in only to "give input during a crucial time when there's a conflict or where there's silence for too long of a time." The composition director seemed to feel pulled toward both perspectives—describing the most effective members of the adjunct staff as "facilitators of group discussion," but virtually never addressing the issue of peer feedback in staff meetings, invariably focusing his comments upon how the small-group leaders might interact more productively with individual students, particularly on matters of grammar.

Tension #3: Small-group leaders should provide (a) nurturing, understanding support to equity students, who often suffer from low self-esteem, or (b) insistent, sometimes aggressive prodding to equity students, who are often stuck in the quicksand of their own recalcitrance.

While both perspectives addressed the oft-observed lack of motivation among equity students and traced its evolution to unfortunate educational histories, they offered markedly different views of how the small-group leaders might address the perceived problem. On the one hand, students were seen as victims of educational abuse, in need of sympathy and gentle encouragement; as one instructor maintained, while these students' confidence has been repeatedly "squashed by teachers," small-group leaders may yet be able to make that "human connection" and communicate the key message that "'you're ok, and your ideas are very good."

Meanwhile, others tended to perceive these students as savvy choice-makers whose avoidance ploys must be forcefully challenged. At a beginning-of-term staff meeting, for example, the composition director described the "typical" student's history of "copping out," "not turning papers in," or

having someone else "correct the papers for him." When a small-group leader asked how to respond to one student's pretentious, "high falutin'" prose, the composition director urged her to assume the persona of tough taskmaster—advising, although group leaders had no actual power to assign grades, that she "give an F to every paper like that":

> And finally the message gets through—"do you think you have to change yet?" You tell them it's a failing paper. That's one of your greatest weapons, by the way. The greatest thing they fear most is that they'll have to do this all over again ... We really have to somehow crack through, break down that barrier.

These students are "not in the power of the English language," maintained one instructor, adding that "they either can't do it or they won't do it." Those who saw basic writers as balky or lazy also spoke often of the need to remember that, as in the composition director's words, "we're giving these students lots of opportunities, but we're also giving them the opportunity to fail." Group leaders were warned to avoid falling into "codependency" in their work with resistant students, and to adopt an attitude of tough-minded detachment.

Tension #4: In evaluating the work of basic writers who are linguistic minorities, small-group leaders need to understand that (a) everyone must be expected to approximate native-like proficiency, or (b) such standards are inappropriate to a linguistically diverse population.

Many of the basic writing teachers emphasized the particular need for training which would better prepare group leaders to work with students who are non-native speakers of English; often, complained one instructor, small-group leaders "don't understand what an ESL student is up against, and ... they evaluate an ESL student the same way they would an American student, an English-as-a-first-language student." With tenured faculty holding varying conceptions of appropriate standards for evaluating the work of these students, a cohesive approach to guiding the group leaders' work remained an elusive goal.

To further vex the issue, when faculty and administrators discussed the problem of evaluating the work of non-native speakers, they often employed rather narrow definitions of an "ESL paper." For instance, when I asked in interviews about the writing of what I called "linguistic minorities" or "bilingual students," nearly everyone answered the question as if I had asked specifically about recent immigrants—non-native speakers of English typically seen as ambitious and bright, but "handicapped" by first-language "interference." Largely sidestepped in such responses were the needs of the campus's "caste" minorities (Ogbu, 1978), many of whom had grown up in the U.S. in homes where a stigmatized language or variety of English had been spoken. The freshman composition director conveyed this tendency

when I asked what sorts of preparation group leaders need to work with "bilingual writers":

> First, [the group leaders] have to realize that the text that student produces is not an adequate measure of their intelligence. So often with native students we make that assumption, you know, that poor writers aren't, you know, aren't bright. We cannot make that assumption about foreign students. Oftentimes they may be quite sensitive, quite bright, but they just don't know the language that well yet.

While he clearly intended to communicate support for non-native speakers, given his apparent acceptance of the notion that the writing of native speakers is a legitimate indicator of overall intelligence, the implicit belief that only "foreign students" count as linguistic minorities becomes rather troubling. While recent immigrants were typically seen as having a legitimate excuse for their departures from native-like writing, students who had grown up primarily in the States but spoken a language other than English at home were considered resistant or inattentive if they displayed less than native-like proficiency in writing.

This pattern of assumption was again revealed when I mentioned to the Dean of Academic Programs that two of the students I had selected as focals had been placed in a campus program for underprepared students solely on the basis of their writing placement exams, having scored quite high on the math test. Before I had a chance to explain that one was a speaker of black English and the other enduringly troubled by an abrupt switch from bilingual to English-immersion instruction in second grade, he volunteered what he thought to be an educated guess:

> Foreign students. Typically that's, if you look at those, and then you look at their names, and you say, "well, I suspect this student is Oriental," or uh, from the Middle East, or something like that. It's not always true, of course, but a lot of time, that's the profile, you see. They come from a program that has had a tradition of having respect for learning, and for things like mathematics, and yet they're having difficulty with the language.

Similar perceptions were displayed in adjunct program staff meetings—"immigrant" students seen as having "respect for learning" but "difficulty with the language," "caste" students seen as less encumbered in a linguistic sense, but held back by attitude problems. When the focus was on relatively recent immigrants, the discussion rarely strayed from how to help with error correction; when the focus was on "caste" minority students, the discussion rarely strayed from concerns about motivation and leader-student trust. In neither case was the meshing of the social and linguistic aspects of students' academic growth explored, reflecting something of the schism that ran through most departmental discussions of linguistic diversity.

Since "caste" minority students who had grown up bilingual did not fit the prevalent "ESL" category, their linguistic negotiations were rendered largely invisible to administrators and faculties, their academic struggles

written off to an obscure resistance to the opportunities before them. As Valdés points out (1991), while such students typically confront a range of lingering linguistic difficulties—spotty vocabulary, inadequate control of English idiom, a preponderance of "fossils" from a native language, etc.—practitioners and researchers alike have tended to overlook these difficulties, focusing their efforts to understand "linguistic minorities" upon those still struggling towards basic communicative competence. Since the campus's equity students belonged much more often to the former category, this gap emerged as both problematic and significant.

Tension #5: In terms of preparation to work with basic writers, small-group leaders most need (a) a quizzical, reflective habit of mind, or (b) specific strategies and techniques.

Debates about adjunct staff training provided a microcosm of the many tensions attending the writing program's role in the campus equity mission. Efforts to describe "what group leaders need to know" were suspended among larger patterns of uncertainty—concerning what it means to "teach the writing process," to promote "collaborative learning," and, particularly, to understand and accommodate diverse students' instructional needs. Although nearly everyone agreed that the current training was inadequate (group leaders were requested but not required to attend two or three staff meetings during the semester), different proposals were advanced for improving it. While program administrators described desired facilities and equipment (a centralized writing lab with computers, overhead projectors, and a library of resource books), four of the five basic writing teachers interviewed focused their comments on the need to promote better "people skills" among the group leaders. Describing their interventions in a lengthening series of conflicts between adjunct staff and students, the instructors emphasized the need to alert group leaders to how their students' writing was situated within a larger process of social and academic adjustment. Noting that the group leaders "really translate into action ... what we've set up as a kind of theoretical base within the classroom," one instructor returned again and again to what she called the "interpersonal ... and cultural aspects" of their work. Mused another, "group leaders often don't know how to engage the students because the students come from such different orientations, and different cultures, and different socio-economic backgrounds."

Meanwhile, the discussions in adjunct staff meetings were peppered with "tips" and "tricks," rarely straying from discussion of practical "solutions" to specific problems—how to threaten the recalcitrant into compliance, how to help students find the errors in their sentences, whom to contact when a problem arises that the group leader can't resolve. When asked how he would envision an "ideal adjunct program," the composition director allowed that more extensive training would be advisable, but outlined an approach which would likewise emphasize the practical over the conceptual.

In what he described as "a formal block of instruction," he would provide "an overview of the writing process—prewriting, revision, and editing—and show them that's the sequence they'll be working with." The training would be organized around help that could be provided in each of these areas, he explained, noting that he would also model appropriate strategies and show videotapes "for critique—what worked, what didn't." Further, he would share an abundance of student writing with the group leaders, this "to show them the kinds of errors they can expect, and strategies for helping students solve them."

To those who saw the group leaders' job as "translating into action" what had been outlined in skeletal form by the classroom teacher, even this amplified training would likely be perceived as inadequate. Such a course of training would appear to sidestep many of the concerns the basic writing teachers saw as key—training group leaders to be facilitators, for instance, or encouraging sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of equity students. Further, while the department remained profoundly divided on the issue of how to address the writing of those students who are non-native speakers of English, no mention was made of these unresolved dilemmas. Again, the tendency was to speak of basic writers as a more or less cohesive group, with the question of what to do on Monday morning taking precedence over quizzical musing or attention to linguistic variety.

Although administrators and faculty alike spoke of the need for more extensive training, many were reluctant to devote time and energy to the enterprise. Ms. Martin made this point often: "the group leaders need many things," she remarked on one such occasion, "but unfortunately I'm just not being paid to do what needs to be done"; similarly, two instructors who met fairly regularly with their small-group leaders acknowledged that this responsibility more properly rested with the program director. Despite instructors' calls for stronger leadership, however, the task of mentoring small-group leaders was largely left to instructors and experienced adjunct staff. For the most part, tenured English department faculty appeared immune to the challenges and lessons so richly present in these small-group sessions, regarding the adjunct program as yet another indication of the campus's good intentions, not as a point of access to the many tensions humming beneath surfaces.

The Small-Group Leaders' Perspectives: Patterns of Tension Revisited

Research Question Three: How do the small-group leaders envision the nature of their task? How do they perceive their roles, and how do they define the purpose of the adjunct program? What are their perspectives on linguistic and cultural diversity? What tensions and conflicts characterize these perspectives, and how do these relate to campus-wide or departmental tensions and conflicts?

Although the themes that ran across and within the thinking of program administrators and faculty also emerged in the reflections of the adjunct staff,

these were most often manifest as a firm commitment to positions on the far extremes of the tension continuum. Lacking systematic training or ongoing guidance, the group leaders tended to simply absorb prevailing instructional wisdom and stances toward diversity, articulating perceptions which often stood in stark contrast to the campus's idealistic rhetoric of "educational equity."

Tension #1: Are the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of "caste" minority students to be seen as strengths from which to build or stumbling blocks to be overcome?

In talking with the small-group leaders and listening to their comments in adjunct staff meetings, I was repeatedly struck by the tendency to assume that many basic writers had grown up in homes plagued by drug abuse, domestic violence, and a general lack of parental interest. While group leaders' statements to this effect were always made with compassion, never were they supported by actual knowledge of the students' histories. Kalie, one of the focal group leaders, communicated such assumptions often, regularly insisting that these students need assurance "that they aren't failing because they aren't smart, but because they have problems"—that is, emotional difficulties that "need to be separated from academic work." Here, for instance, she argues the need to encourage equity students to seek psychological counseling:

> They're probably going to need counseling more and go look for counseling less, um, because their culture might tell them that they shouldn't go to counseling, or they might feel ashamed of the problems that their family has ... the fact that they're from a broken family might mean that they have more problems with relationships. Everybody's gonna go through the boyfriend-girlfriend problems, right?—but what if, you know, what if your dad left your mom because your dad got hooked on drugs, and your mom got dumped on welfare, and a lot of stuff like that.

The other small-group leader I followed was Morgan, a 27-year-old African-American who had grown up in the predominantly white community that surrounded the campus. Even as administrators and faculty were looking to her as a promising resource for other minority students, Morgan spoke frequently of her ambivalent sense of ethnic identity—her ease in the familiar company of Anglos, her sense of discomfort in entering a room where most of those present were fellow African-Americans. Like Kalie, Morgan frequently depicted her students' backgrounds as somehow deprived or problematic. When asked what group leaders need to know about cultural diversity, for instance, she produced a litany of negative stereotypes—Hispanic men will have trouble dealing with strong women, Hispanic and Native American women will be shy and retiring, and so on. Although she seldom asked about their backgrounds, Morgan tended to assume that the equity students in her group came from trauma-ridden situations, and that they could therefore be persuaded to regard school as a

promising escape route: "I want to show my students how they can create their lives and destinies, almost by virtue of the fact that they are in America, and they are in school," she wrote in her log, "I want them to know that they don't have to be victims to their particular circumstances."

Both group leaders likewise attached stigma to students' linguistic backgrounds, regarding their differences as handicaps, as deficits—this, rather ironically, in an area of the country where bilingualism represents an increasingly important social resource. Kalie spoke of linguistic difference in particularly negative terms—Hispanic students' "weird grammar problems," African-Americans' "severe dialect":

> Hispanics and blacks, sometimes they speak in colloquialisms among their friends ... and if they don't interact enough with other groups, they're not really gonna be able to speak better, and speaking better does make a big difference in how they can see mistakes in their writing.

Regarding black English as both a "sub-standard" mode of speech and an important marker of a separatist "sub-culture," Kalie mused sadly that "a lot of them can't break out of that, to write proper English."

Morgan likewise regarded linguistic difference as a disadvantage her students must overcome. Black English, for example, was associated in her mind with illiteracy and lack of education:

> I mean with the whole slavery thing it was illegal to teach, and this illiteracy and coming up speaking black English, and teaching that to your children. They just don't have the background. So it is difficult, you know, when you're used to saying "I be," or "I fixin'" (laughs).

Meanwhile, Morgan believed that those students who had grown up speaking Spanish would produce writing not only besmirched by first-language interference, but also by inadequate attention to the rhetorical demands of academic writing:

> Or something like Spanish, where instead of saying the "white house" you say the "house white." I think that, you know, that these are issues in their writing, and it creates problems. They aren't used to having to be this formal, or having to write in this way, or having to be so descriptive, you know, being such a careful observer of what's happening around them.

Both Kalie and Morgan remained somewhat mystified by their students' frequent reluctance to leave behind their presumably troubled pasts and assimilate into the Anglo norms of the campus. Reflecting upon "inner city kids, and minorities" in her log, Morgan vowed that "I will tell them that I'm not responsible for what has happened in their past, but I can have a helping hand in their future." According to both group leaders, students bore the responsibility to grasp this "helping hand" pulling them towards the linguistic and cultural mainstream: "If they don't join in and take

responsibility on themselves to fit in," observed Kalie, "then they may *not* fit in."

Tension #2: Should small-group leaders facilitate or direct?

As Cazden (1988) points out, when educators aren't making a conscious effort to encourage peer discussion, most tend to "default" into the directive, "teacher-talk" register. Not surprisingly, that's what the small-group leaders almost unswervingly did—interacting with one student at a time, and guiding the discussion towards concerns they felt the teacher might identify as priorities. The more unabashedly directive of the two, Kalie complained that "it's really hard to get the students to be specific," and explained this was why she so often filled in with her own directive and sometimes "theatrical" asides; adopting a transmission view of the teaching-learning process, she called a session successful when a concept she'd presented "hit 'em right on the head," or when the students' cries of "read mine first!" signalled their eager competition for her attention. On such occasions, Kalie would typically offer a rapid-fire barrage of questions and suggestions, seldom pausing to probe a student's intended meanings.

Morgan, on the other hand, was making a conscious effort to "sit back more" in her interactions with students. Having recently attended a number of collaborative learning workshops, she had come to believe in the value of "talking less," and regularly searched for questions that would elicit students' ideas and feedback. Morgan's belief that group members and leaders should interact "as equals," was undercut, however, by her abiding concern that students' levels of ability and motivation would limit the value of any feedback they might have to offer. Indeed, Morgan seldom encouraged students to interact with one another, more usually working one-on-one with individuals while the others silently awaited their turns. As Morgan asked the questions (albeit seemingly open-ended, non-directive ones) and the students responded, the impression emerged that even as she began to "sit back more," she still felt a strong urge to offer emphatic guidance: in a telling aside, she described her shift from "tellin' people what I want 'em to do" to "askin' 'em the questions to lead 'em to what I want 'em to do."

Tension #3: Should group leaders provide nurturing, understanding support, or insistent, aggressive prodding?

The two focal group leaders displayed varying degrees of inner tension around these issues. Kalie, the seasoned veteran of the two, tended to flick aside the student engagement issue as though it had little to do with her: "usually they're not that motivated," she allowed, commenting upon the preponderance of "troublemakers" in her small groups, but surmising that the higher incidence of "family problems" and poverty among these students was the root cause. Maintaining that their tendency to "write as short as they can" was the result of years of uninspired schooling, Kalie explained that she

tried to get students stirred up, to encourage them to find topics about which they truly cared:

> Sitting there and going, well, you know, "writing is real fun," and blah, blah, blah doesn't always do a lot of good. I try to find out what they're interested in and help them see how it can be useful for that. Sometimes I don't speak specifically about writing, but I'll get around to it eventually.

Unconcerned that she often ended up doing most of the talking in her groups, Kalie hoped her students would find her lively audacity contagious, and often punctured her own decorum with provocative, playful asides.

Morgan displayed considerably more conflict around the issue of student motivation. Early in the semester, she described her role as "a really big cheerleader," noting that she wanted to avoid "coming down like a hard ass." The students' classroom teacher could play the role of "tough cop" or "coach," she maintained; her own approach would be to establish "a personal, intimate relationship" that would allow her to "gain their trust." A few weeks into the term, however, she began to observe the difficulty of both establishing a "warm communication with the students," and letting them know that she had "expectations of them to do their best"; and by midterm, her "cheerleading" had become markedly muted, her manner more resigned and brisk. One rainy morning, when the two students who had shown up proved stubbornly untalkative, she could no longer conceal her gathering frustration: "I'm feelin' like I'm wastin' my time," she admitted, adding rather sharply, "do you guys, like, have *nothing* to say?" In the weeks that followed, Morgan struggled to achieve a more detached relationship to her students, to tell herself that their "lack of motivation" was not her "fault," hungrily consuming advice from those who spoke of the dangers of instructional "codependency" and "the student's right to fail." While her manner became more crisp and her language more formal and academic, however, Morgan's transformation remained incomplete. In the end, she'd internalized both poles of the debate concerning equity student motivation—alternately believing that they needed supportive invitations to share their emerging ideas and writing, or, on the other hand, that demanding insistence was more to the point.

Tension #4: In evaluating the work of linguistic minorities, should the group leaders expect native-like proficiency, or regard such standards as inappropriate to a diverse population?

Like campus and program administrators, the group leaders recognized recent immigrants' difficulties with English, but often failed to grasp the more subtle struggles of non-native speakers who had lived in the States for a number of years; indeed, Morgan did not realize until late in the term that three of her students were non-native speakers. Meanwhile, Morgan assumed that the problems these students had with writing were simply the

result of underpreparation or lack of motivation: "It's just you didn't get the background in mechanics," Morgan told a student who had spent much of his childhood in Mexico, "these things are easily learned." Another student in the group had spoken only Navajo as a preschooler, and often struggled in vain to locate English words for meanings she could readily express in her first language; unaware that the student was a non-native speaker, Morgan interpreted her long silences as a sign of unwillingness or insecurity. In instances such as these, where students were members of "caste" or "involuntary" minority groups (Ogbu, 1978), attempts to address their linguistic needs became enmeshed in the politically charged issue of assimilation versus resistance—manifest, for instance, in the group leaders' impatience with students' "writing the way they speak," and in students' reluctance to advertise the fact that they were non-native speakers of English (or mainstream English).

Even where group leaders were aware that a student was a non-native speaker, the assistance provided was often limited to simple correction of grammatical lapses, or, more non-directively, to encouraging the student to identify such mistakes. While students sometimes reported finding such feedback helpful, since the principles behind the corrections were seldom explained, one is left to wonder whether students took away any generalized understandings. Further, these interactions tended to communicate that a high premium was to be placed upon mechanical correctness, and that a more or less native-like proficiency was regarded as a reasonable short-term goal.

Tension #5: Should adjunct staff training emphasize a quizzical, reflective habit of mind, or specific strategies and techniques?

Kalie and Morgan echoed the conviction among administrators and faculty that more extensive training was needed, but for the most part described the needed support in rather limited terms. In Kalie's mind, what new staff most needed was help in dealing with the inevitable "troublemakers," the "difficult people" who had learned "how to manipulate" and make life miserable for novices. As a way to address such challenges, she suggested that new group leaders be given a list of senior group leaders' phone numbers; insisting that "classes don't do a shit worth of good," Kalie did see a value in holding periodic meetings at which experienced group leaders might similarly dispense "tips" and "tricks."

While Morgan had often felt the need to air problems and sort through possible solutions with other group leaders, she too saw a course for new adjuncts as an excessive imposition. In reflecting upon needed training, she also sidestepped more strictly instructional issues, emphasizing the challenge of "troublemakers"; indeed, although Morgan had struggled over the semester with a range of complex issues—how much direction to provide her group, how to address the needs of her linguistically and culturally varied students, how to respond to student writing—as she described a possible

training scenario, she focused almost exclusively upon learning to maintain a dignified air of authority in the face of student waywardness.

In short, although Kalie and Morgan longed for professional autonomy, both tended to present rather one-dimensional visions of the sorts of understandings group leaders need, defining expertise as possession of the "right" collection of strategies—for working on writing, yes, but more emphatically, for resolving perceived attitude problems.

The Students' Response: Borders, Boundaries, and the Adjunct Program

> Research Question Four: What is the nature of the kinds of struggles these ethnically diverse students face as they attempt to adjust at once to the demands of academic life and to a nearly all-white social environment? What is the nature of the responses they receive from the small-group leaders? How do students characterize these struggles? How do the small-group leaders characterize them?

Occupying an institutional context in which few engaged in fine-grained analysis of equity students' needs, the small-group leaders were generally unable to see the many points at which their work intersected with other worlds, other meanings—with these students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, with their attempts to adjust to life at a predominantly Anglo campus, and with the history of their struggles with writing. The following student portraits[7] suggest some of the kinds of understandings that might have usefully informed the group leaders' work—understandings that extend beyond the urgency of the instructional moment and students' grapplings with the language of the academy, to their struggles to belong there, to bridge the gap between where they'd been and where they'd arrived.

Sylvia

Cultural and Linguistic Background

Sylvia's family had immigrated from Mexico when she was eight months old, settling in a prosperous, traditionally Anglo farming community. Her parents had never become fully proficient in English, and Spanish remained the language of home. Although both held relatively low-paying jobs, they had managed to purchase some lucrative farmland, send money home to relatives, and save for Sylvia's education. Still, as Sylvia explained in an essay entitled "My Dream," she "felt sorry" for her parents, who "didn't have the opportunity to make choices" that she now possessed:

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[7] As noted earlier, four students were followed over the semester of data collection. The two case studies presented here were selected because they best convey some of the variety which characterized this student population as a whole.

> When they were my age, times were hard for them and life was pretty much planned out for them ... Well, in this day and age I have choices. I can go to college, or I could quit school altogether and work. It is my decision. I also have the choice of the field to go into. I could be an engineer, a teacher, or a mathematician. It is entirely up to me. The jobs are out there, I just have to choose which one I will pursue.

Elsewhere in the essay, Sylvia explained that while her own life was already rather different from her parents', she would always share their deep commitment to family: "my family would be the most important thing in my life," she wrote, "because they will always be there for me, and they will always stand beside me."

But already, Sylvia's dual commitment to family and worldly achievement was fraught with paradox. Even as her parents boasted of their daughter's presence at a four-year college, they worried that she was losing touch with her roots; and even as Sylvia was trying to recapture a sense of ethnic identity, she longed to break away from the typecasting that had long plagued her, to be perceived "just like any other American." In one of her essays she described the "many barriers" she'd had to cross, the "many negative messages" she'd overcome: "my family back in Mexico is proud that I am going to school," she noted, "but some ... feel that I should do things the traditional way, which is to stay home until I get married."

Although Sylvia's parents had helped force her first big step into the Anglo world—when they sent her, then a five-year-old who could speak only Spanish, to a local kindergarten—they'd had ample cause to regret her cultural and linguistic estrangement. The problem first became evident during Sylvia's second-grade year, when she was abruptly switched from her bilingual classroom into an English immersion program. For a time, she was gripped with "the fear of speaking in either English or Spanish," and had trouble communicating at home and school alike:

> So by the time they, they, said, "well, here's English," I was like "whoa, wait a minute slow down here!" It was just like a big switch, it was kinda hard for me. And ever since then I've had that [writer's] block kinda thing ... I didn't even know the basics of my own language, you know, when they said, "boo, here's English." You know. And the funny thing is, I *lost* my Spanish ... And you know, my parents, it was a really, [exasperated sigh], it was so tough to communicate.

"I lost it," she repeated softly, as if still amazed that such a thing could happen. "I could have lost it completely," she added, "and not even speak Spanish right now, and *really* be called 'coconut.'"

Deeply concerned, Sylvia's parents arranged a month's stay in Mexico between her second- and third-grade years—this in the hopes that she might recover the ability to speak her native language, and also realize the link it represented to her extended family. At first, she was halting and awkward, but by the end of that pivotal month she was once again comfortable speaking Spanish to relatives and Hispanic friends. Even as Sylvia approached young adulthood, Spanish remained the language spoken at home, especially when

one of her parents was present—"to show respect," as her father had always said.

Sylvia remained apprehensive, however, about her ability to communicate in Spanish with relative strangers: "My fear," she explained, "is that I cannot pronounce the words and they won't know what I'm talking about." While she felt somewhat uncertain about her English writing, she was even more insecure about composing in her native language: "I just can't write it properly," she maintained. Sylvia felt fully competent in neither language—in both, keenly aware of her foreigner's accent, and deeply uneasy about her abilities as a writer. It would be inadequate to say that Sylvia had made an incomplete transition from Spanish to English, the reality being vastly more complex, more tangled with dilemma. As Sylvia described her sense of being caught between languages, she inevitably described her sense of being caught as well between worlds: "It's like I have two different cultures," she maintained, "but I can't choose."

While Sylvia's path had been far from easy, she was pleased with her progress, and quick to point out that her cultural and linguistic negotiations had helped her towards a number of important realizations. She had begun to see her bilingualism as a resource, and was fast overcoming her habitual shyness about speaking Spanish in public. Her own experiences in school had also convinced her of the value of bilingual education, a topic she took up in her last essay of the semester: "How is a student going to be able to comprehend a second language," she asked, "if the student has not had a strong foundation of his first language?"

Sylvia had heard of Cummins' (1979, 1981) "interdependence hypothesis," and saw herself as living evidence of its truth. With her family's support, she'd long been struggling towards an "additive" bilingualism, towards a facility in two languages that would empower her in new ways without diminishing the importance of the old. Only as an insightful and ambitious young woman was she beginning to grasp the full complexity of that struggle, and to cast a discerning eye upon the lingering effects of what had happened to her—to her sense of linguistic competence, to her sense of identity—in second grade.

Struggles With Writing

Although her instructor saw Sylvia as the strongest writer in her basic writing course, she complained that Sylvia "doesn't go as much into depth as she needs to," and, lacking confidence in her writing ability, "sticks to real simple forms." Sylvia seemed well aware of these weaknesses, and spoke often of her desire to move beyond the five-paragraph essay she'd first encountered in a writing workshop for Hispanic high school students. However, when Ms. Martin asked for a written description of the "basic ingredients of an essay," Sylvia gamely recited the well-worn precepts she'd heard again and again:

> The three basic ingrediants of an essay are thesis, sufficient support for the thesis, and logical arrangement of that support. The thesis is the main point that the author wants to get across to the reader. Sometimes the thesis is mentioned somewhere in the essay or the reader has to determine what it is from the reading. Sufficient support for the thesis is giving backup evidence to the thesis. The support could be factual or not. Logical arrangement is how the author wants to arrange his thoughts. The arrangement makes the paper flow.

But as the semester drew to a close, Sylvia was still somewhat unsure of how to offer "sufficient support" or "make her papers flow." Here, for instance, is a paragraph from a five-paragraph essay on "stereotypes" that she turned in during the final weeks:

> Society has stereotyped Latina women through the use of the media in television shows and movies. Sometimes the media shows Latinas as hookers that the white men prefer because they think that the women can give the men "good sex." Young Latinas have also been portrayed as being pregnant with two kids. The young women are also shown as having an abusive husband that beats her for the smallest reason, like a spot of dirt on the wall. Latinas are rarely cast into the roles of college students or graduates. I am a Latina woman who is in a four-year college, making something of my life. I don't have an abusive husband or children, but I am still fighting these stereotypes.

As with most of Sylvia's work, her instructor felt that while this piece was adequate, it was also a bit lackluster, as if she'd stopped short—short of the livelier style that seemed well within her grasp, and short of expressing the vital emotions that lay just beneath the surface.

When asked on a beginning-of-term questionnaire if she liked to write, Sylvia had replied, "Not much. When I feel like writing, I write about things that interest me." But even when writing about matters of profound personal concern, Sylvia tended to rush, hurrying through the gist of a story or argument rather than providing the sort of detail that her writing teachers always seemed to want. This tendency was evident in an essay describing her mother's battle with cancer, which began with stage-setting realism, but soon hurried through long and significant stretches of time:

> Seven years ago a major changed came into my mother's life and swept the family with her. One day I arrived at home after dance practice. I walked in the house, it was pitch dark, there were no lights on. Usually the stove light is on, but not this day. As I walked into the house, I got a strange feeling in my body. My mother was in her bedroom asleep. When she woke up, she looked as if she had seen a ghost. She was yellow, and her eyes were blood shot from crying. She did not want to tell me what was wrong. Eventually, she told me she had cancer. My mother said she had to make a decision whether to get an operation or not. She decided to go through with the operation. After the operation, my mother had to go through chemotherapy. The first day after chemotherapy, she came home all drained out. She felt as if her spirit was sucked out by a vacuum cleaner. I felt as if I also had cancer because I was defenseless to help or stop her suffering.

As was so often the case in Sylvia's writing, despite an occasionally effective phrase or detail (the ominously unlit stove light, the "strange feeling" it inspired), she lapsed here into a hurried synopsis of thoughts and emotions, leaving largely unfulfilled the striking promise of those opening lines.

In an interview, Sylvia traced her struggles with writing to her troubled linguistic background—to the fact that she had first learned to write in an atmosphere of linguistic conflict and confusion, and at a time when she was being prematurely immersed in an all-English classroom environment. Written words came forth more easily in English than in Spanish, but somehow her composing still felt hidebound and unnatural; somehow she'd never come to visualize the reader over her shoulder, to see composing as an opportunity to express or convey meanings. Meanwhile, describing Sylvia as a "very, very bright young woman," her instructor remained puzzled by her acceptable but undazzling performance as a writer, surmising that she'd developed "a little bit of a negative attitude about writing." While Ms. Martin believed Sylvia had problems with "second language input," she held that "it's more in her case just a kind of a lack of interest in writing," since "her language interference problems aren't that severe." "I'd love to see something she's written in Spanish," she added hopefully.

Sylvia's description of her enduringly troubled relationship with both English and Spanish belied the assumption that her writing was plagued by a clear-cut case of first-language "interference." Although Sylvia believed that her struggle to bring forth words in written English was rooted in the trauma of her early schooling, she only dropped hints to that effect in the presence of her teacher or group leader. Her written words remained mere kernels, the germs of ideas that might be encouraged to grow in the warm light of conversation and engaged feedback.

Her Group Leader's Response

Morgan saw many similarities between herself and Sylvia—in their shared struggle against those who would accuse them of ethnic disloyalty, and in their propensity for stubborn resistance. One morning, as Morgan struggled to generate a brainstorming session, she paused to meet Sylvia's gaze: "You're giving me a bored look," Morgan observed; "You've got an intimidating look—I thought I was the only one with that look." At the last session of the semester, Morgan was a bit more direct: after Sylvia declined to read aloud the essay she'd been scanning silently, Morgan observed, "You're so feisty sometimes, I just want to like, grab you by that hair." Unperturbed, Sylvia explained that she had a lot on her mind. "I'm teasin' you," Morgan quickly explained, if somewhat unconvincingly.

Morgan struggled all semester to establish solidarity and rapport, responding to Sylvia's often abbreviated comments with extended descriptions of her own ideas and experiences. At times, however, Morgan's strong identification with Sylvia interfered with her understanding of how their backgrounds diverged, and possibly impeded her efforts to help Sylvia

formulate her own thoughts in writing. When Sylvia began brainstorming her essay about her mother's battle with cancer, for instance, Morgan mistakenly assumed that Sylvia's mother, like her own, had died of the disease: "My mom had cancer and died too," she said, adding that when she tried to write about the experience for a timed essay exam, she'd felt "too emotional" and found she "couldn't do it." "Oh, she didn't die!" Sylvia quickly explained, adding that while she might feel somewhat emotional about the subject, she was sure she could write about it. "Always be that critical writer," Morgan warned, "the objective writer ... try to put yourself outside of the situation and look at it in terms of writing a story." In an interview, Sylvia would explain that she'd found the cautionary note unnecessary; she too was a private person, she explained, but before she could write on a subject, she had to feel personally connected to it.

In a final interview, Morgan observed that Sylvia was seeming more receptive to her comments and a bit more open about sharing her work. Still, Morgan shared Ms. Martin's feeling that although Sylvia had "complex ideas," she was readily frustrated by the effort it took to express them in writing; there's "something in her personality that comes out her writing," Morgan observed—a tendency to "just present things," to forego "a deeper analysis." Morgan saw something of this same "black-and-white" approach in Sylvia's attitude towards the group, regarding Sylvia's reluctance to participate more freely in the discussions as a refusal to "worry about anybody else's trips."

Since Morgan apparently never suspected that English was not Sylvia's native language, lacking in these reflections was attention to how Sylvia's linguistic background played into her present difficulties with writing. What Morgan and Ms. Martin believed was no doubt true to a point—embarrassed that her writing wasn't stronger, Sylvia was reluctant to share her preliminary efforts, and admittedly spent inadequate time revising her essays. If Morgan were to provide effective supplementary help, she needed to understand the psychological and linguistic reasons behind this behavior—to overcome the assumption that Sylvia's problems with writing could be written off to a rigidly perfectionistic slant of character, and, perhaps, a touch of basic laziness.

Sylvia's Perspective on the Adjunct Component

"I know I need help with my writing," Sylvia wrote in her journal after an early small-group session; "I feel this class is going to help because their is more of an individual help ... the group leaders here are willing to help the students, if the students want help." In the beginning, Sylvia explained that especially since Morgan did not assign grades, she seemed less threatening and therefore more approachable than Ms. Martin: "I see her as a friend, but with the skills of a group leader," she explained. While Sylvia believed that she'd ultimately have to overcome her writer's block on her own, she also believed that her group leader could help by "having patience" and

understanding the source of her seeming resistance. It's important, she emphasized, that both teachers and group leaders "don't give up on the students—'cause that's what I think a lot of teachers do, just give up on the student, and say 'well they're not gonna do it, or they don't wanna do it.'"

In a final interview, however, Sylvia admitted that she hadn't attended the small-group sessions as often as she'd initially thought she would, explaining that she'd gradually "lost interest." She confessed her disappointment in Morgan's shifting attitude: "we're not that blind," she noted, recalling that Morgan's enthusiasm was "really off and on." "Sometimes she would come to the group all pumped up and ready to go, and we wouldn't be all pumped up with her," she observed, "but that's how reality goes." Although Sylvia felt she understood Morgan's reaction to the group, she was still troubled by it:

> I think she had high expectations of all of us in the beginning. But then when she got to know us, I guess through our writing and through our discussions, she, I don't think she had high expectations ... when someone has high expectations and, and the person doesn't please them, ... then the other person will be all like, down, and like "I didn't do my job right."

Although Sylvia had initially looked to the small groups as an opportunity to receive friendly but expert advice from a quasi-teacher, she eventually found that she preferred going to friends for assistance:

> Because, well, because I know the kids, I know the students in my group, but I don't know Morgan that well ... We've talked on a group basis and stuff about our experiences growing up and stuff, but I still don't have that personal touch.

Sylvia found an audiotaped brainstorming session to be representative of what she hadn't particularly liked about Morgan's approach. As Sylvia struggled to collect ideas for an essay about her mother, Morgan fired out questions intended to elicit greater specificity:

> Morgan: Um, ok, are you like thinking of any characteristics you wanna like throw out back and forth, that you want to talk about? How would you approach writing about this person?
>
> Sylvia: (pause) Uh, I dunno (an embarrassed laugh).
>
> Morgan: You're a college student, you should know, that's why you're here. (pause, then Sylvia starts to say something.) Any possible approaches?
>
> Sylvia: Just the way she has influenced me in my life.
>
> Morgan: What ways has she influenced you? Positive, negative? Let's start from there.

When I asked about her response to the session, Sylvia filled in some of what was left unsaid in the rapid-fire exchange of questions and answers, recalling in detail the pain of watching her mother worn down by chemotherapy: "she

would look at us and cry and stuff," Sylvia observed softly, "but then she would say 'no, I've gotta do it for them' ... I admire my mother a lot." When Morgan began quizzing her during the group session, however, Sylvia had felt both reluctant and blocked: 'Cause at the time, Morgan asked me, and I wasn't ready for this," she recalled. Sylvia had also been somewhat offended by Morgan's remark that "you're a college student, you *should* know":

> I didn't like that comment! I mean, just 'cause you're a college student, and because you're here, doesn't mean you know everything. And it was something, that um, she just threw me off on that one, like a curve ball there, you know.

When I played the same tape back for Morgan, she commented only that she'd been "startin' to try and talk less," and that she'd been fairly happy with the response; however, while Morgan's goals had been to provide "collaborative" supports and to communicate high expectations, both were undermined by the assumptions she'd already made about Sylvia's level of motivation. Morgan's good intentions notwithstanding, these assumptions clouded her ability to approach their interactions with open-minded curiosity, to provide the sorts of tactful feedback and ongoing support that might embolden Sylvia to take the needed risks in her writing.

Al

Cultural and Linguistic Background

In one of his essays, Al described his home community, Southwood,[8] as "a playground of death and poverty," a place where "you could step on a person's shoe and be shot for it," where "money and revenge were the operative words." He described how he'd been shunned by many of his old friends for his decision to pursue an education, for working long after-school hours at minimum wage while they amassed small fortunes dealing drugs. Still, he hoped to go back after graduating from college, to establish a career there, and to become a positive force for change.

But to move closer to these goals, Al found himself at a distant college, trying to speak and write a language he still found alien. Although determined to adopt mainstream English while on campus, he was still struggling with his new language on many levels; "I feel [more] comfortable," he explained, "talkin' the way, you know, I was brought up to talk." He noted that because he still thought in the language of home, each time he spoke up in class he had to pause to translate his thoughts into mainstream English. Sometimes, he acknowledged, this presented a cognitive overload:

> If you listen to me you can kinda get some sense of how I talk, you know, um, you can get some sense of how I try to say things but it comes out a different way. Uh, one thing's

[8] "Southwood" is a pseudonym.

goin' through my mind, but it just comes out of my mouth not differently, but not in the sense I was thinkin' about it.

Al explained that he still spoke black English on visits home:

> When you leave a certain way, people expect you to come back the same. And if I go back talkin' like I'm, you know, this much higher than they are, they wouldn't respect me, you know. It's like they would respect me but they wouldn't get as close to me as they would usually do because they're thinking "oh, he think he's too good for us—he talkin' this kinda language."

When asked what would happen if he began speaking at home the way he was speaking at college, Al replied with disdain: "I'd stay in the house, with my mother," he observed, "I wouldn't go out with the same friends I hung with ... That's the main thing about goin' home, you know ... they go 'well you think that because you're in college you can't ... hang with us' ... that's the sort of thing I'm afraid of."

Al's home community was entirely African-American, and although it was nestled within a city noted for its cultural diversity, he was a teenager by the time he first engaged in conversation with an Anglo. The first member of his family to attend college, Al was charting new ground, undergoing a process of linguistic and cultural change that was realigning his loyalties and leading him towards a promising but still uncertain future. Only when he visited home did Al realize just how much he was changing: "I haven't been home in a long time," he noted with a shrug, "so I don't know how much I've changed."

Struggles With Writing

Al traced his wavering enthusiasm for writing to his ongoing struggle to move beyond the personal experience essay:

> I like to write, to the extent you know that I like to write about things that I like, you know. It's hard for me to write about things that I'm not real interested in. I'll do it, but I don't feel it's the best writing I can do. Like on my last essay, when she [Ms. Martin] told me that it was the best writin' that, that you know, she's seen me writin', I was writin' about my feelings—my feelings are all at home, my neighborhood.

Al had worked longer on this piece than on any other he had written all year, poring over his thesaurus in search of the perfect word, the apt phrase to capture the striking contrasts among his many images of home. Here are the first two paragraphs of that essay, entitled "Living Day to Day in Southwood":

> Drug dealers, pimps, thugs and thieves: those were the categories people generally placed me in whenever I mentioned to someone that I was from Southwood. No matter how well I presented myself, I was always thrown into a pot of stereotypes and misconceptions that stuck to me like the odor of a garbage dump. Southwood however, meant much more to me than the average outsider could see.

> For me, Southwood meant struggle and survival of the fittest for who ever lived there. During my childhood years, Southwood was a great place to live and grow up. It was no different than any other community: we all had our problems and each of us dealt with them accordingly. As a child, I frolicked endlessly in my neighborhood park at the top of the hill. I remember being able to go by myself to the park, hop on the swing and ride it until I could almost fall backwards with laughter and joy. I recall rolling, flipping, running and jumping through the grassy jungle of Howell Park, which was my home away from home while playing. During this time in my life there was an air of happiness, community pride and love in Southwood that could not go unnoticed by any outsider visiting Southwood for the first time.

On a beginning-of-term questionnaire, Al had explained that he was learning to enjoy writing more than ever before, noting that it provided a vehicle for "expressing feelings." In an interview, he observed that "anything that's personal to me, I can write about"; on the other hand, he admitted, "if you're not interested, you just do the minimum, to get over." In "Living Day to Day in Southwood," Al approached a deeply personal topic with unprecedented fluency and, occasionally, stylistic flair. Here, on the other hand, are the first paragraphs of an essay Al wrote soon afterwards on the subject of "justice," this in response to an "argumentative" assignment:

> In my opinion, justice is the single most influential force controlling our lives today. In the following pages I will cite reasons exactly why justice has the overpowering effect on us it does. During your reading you will find exactly how the definition of justice has gone astray.
>
> Since the beginning of time, we have had a legal system of one sort or another. One of the earliest legal systems was that of Egytptian rulers. Their reign was supreme. For example, King Tutankhamen ruled Egypt for over eleven years. Was there no corruption? None! It was absolutely impossible. Pharoahs ruled with iron fists and crushing amounts of non-existant. During this time there as no real sense of justice: the only law was that of the pharoahs. From this we can determine that once justice is divided, many factors come into play; one of these such factors being corruption.
>
> Through the years we have evolved into a complex animal, capable of establishing laws supposedly for and by the people. Which brings us to present day America so great. In Egyptian time there was a great deal of control v.s. today where on a common day you might find fifty killings in a state, under the table bribes, insider trading scandals, mass murderers going scott free or finding freedom in the form of a technicaity. Is this justice? Yes, for the rich, the murders or the well connected.

Although Ms. Martin noted that Al had "good ideas here," she also commented that "I sometimes felt a bit lost in this essay." The latter seems the more candid observation, as this piece meandered from focus to focus, bereft of connecting threads. As Al admitted, when writing about "things that are not really personal," he would sometimes "just like ... write anything, just rhetoric, you know."

It was as though writing were two different activities for Al: the deeply engaged process of describing matters close to the heart, of carefully translating his thoughts into the language of the academy, and the slapdash recording of half-cooked ideas, committed to paper for the sole purpose of fulfilling a requirement. He enjoyed sharing writing he'd struggled long to

produce, but kept his lesser efforts hidden from view. Proud, private, and self-reliant, Al was loathe to expose his fledgling first thoughts, his conception of the composing process having more to do with rugged individualism than the purported benefits of collaboration. While Al increasingly found himself in the company of friends who were more than willing to talk with him about his work, he explained that "most of the time I'm very independent ... I never liked askin' people for anything."

His Group Leaders' Response

Morgan. Ms. Martin first assigned Al to Morgan's group, this in the hope that he would find her charisma and enthusiasm irresistible—that he would attend regularly, as Ms. Martin later said with a wry smile, "just for the chance to sit next to her." Likewise regarding Morgan as a natural role-model for other African-Americans, the Dean of Academic Programs had also appointed her Al's equity student mentor, charged with helping him over the academic and social hurdles of his freshman year. The match had seemed both logical and fortunate: while Al was just beginning his college career, Morgan was already a campus success story, and, as a fellow African-American, in a seemingly ideal position to provide appropriate support.

Many were surprised, then, when an embittered Al asked to be moved out of Morgan's group during the second month of the semester. She was puzzled and hurt by his sudden disgruntlement, which he explained only in sketchy terms to Ms. Martin, and not at all to Morgan. Only in retrospect do the signs of developing trouble become apparent from early on—in Morgan's reflections upon her initial work with Al, and in their superficially cordial conversations in the group. In a beginning-of-term interview, for instance, Morgan seemed keenly aware that Al had grown up in a community where gang violence was endemic, and implied that his background and current coterie of African-American friends were holding him back:

> I feel he's just caught between two worlds, and, um, I see he's got quite a following of friends and stuff on campus. One time we walked into the [campus meeting area] and he was supposed to be in there with us, and we happened to walk in there, he was in there hanging out and eatin' and stuff, and I'm like, "Ok Al, come on, you know, let's go" ... I'd like to see him, you know, give himself more of a chance, you know, and take his schooling more seriously.

As a fellow African-American, Morgan felt she was in a particularly good position to help convince Al of the value of academic success:

> I'm trying to pull in the whole race and ethnicity thing, and, well, I'm black too, and I'm a minority too. I haven't succumbed, which I think a whole lot of minority people tend to do—"oh well, you know, don't be an Oreo, and don't be black on the outside and white on the inside." They think you're selling out. And um, I'm trying to use this to say well I'm not selling out ... I'm tryin' to get this feeling across, that I'm not any different from you, at all, except that I'm choosing to be real involved in my education.

There's a troublesome if perhaps unintended resonance to that last statement, with its implication that Al was somehow not choosing to be "real involved" in his education, his background having somehow diminished his motivation.

Although Morgan noted that she tried at all times to be "real respectful," she was drawn to the challenge of penetrating Al's occasional silences. Sometimes, she explained in an initial interview, she would approach him as a "really big mommy," expressing concern when he seemed downhearted and inviting him to talk about his troubles. When Al politely declined such overtures, Morgan tried other ways to establish rapport. Although she had said in an interview that she'd never minded living in a predominantly white community, Morgan joked with Al about the demographics of the college community: "Ow, white, you know?" When he came in late to an early group session, Morgan yelled to him from across the crowded room ("Hey, buddy, over here") and gently reminded him of looming deadlines. Always, Morgan worked to establish rapport, reminding him that he could use the group time "to get part of your requirement out of the way, since we need to be here anyway, right?" Meanwhile, Al sidestepped Morgan's questions about his work, preferring to sort through his initial ideas on his own, respectfully declining her invitations to explore his options collaboratively.

When Al went to Ms. Martin to request a transfer to another group, he primarily complained of Morgan's tendency to act "like his mother," pointing with particular emphasis to a recent occasion when she'd criticized his eating habits. Ms. Martin summarized the conversation for both Morgan and Kalie, and among the adjunct staff, the quasi-Freudian phrase "Al's problem with his mother" soon became shorthand for the prevalent interpretation. Hearsay became accepted truth, and a perhaps more important aspect of their rift was overlooked and forgotten.

In their final sessions together, a gathering conflict over cultural and linguistic difference was plainly evident, particularly as the group discussed an assigned essay entitled "What's Wrong With Black English," written by an African-American who took heated exception with those who see vitality and political power in the black vernacular. "It hurts me," the essayist maintained, "to sit in lecture halls and hear fellow black students complain that the professor "be tripping dem out using big words dey can't understand," and it hurts even more to be "stripped of my own blackness simply because I know my way around the English language." "I don't think I talk white," she concluded, "I think I talk right."[9]

A few days before Al decided to leave Morgan's group, they'd read this piece aloud together, each student taking a paragraph. Urging the students to move in closer so they could all hear, Morgan had turned to Al and remarked

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[9] Written by Rachel L. Jones, a 26-year-old reporter for the St. Petersburg Times, the piece was first published as a *Newsweek* "My Turn" column on December 27, 1982. It was reprinted in the essay anthology Ms. Martin was using as a class text (*Viewpoints*, ed. W. Royce Adams, published by D.C. Heath).

lightly, "come on, I won't bite." The same could not be said of the ensuing discussion, in which Al struggled somewhat futilely to articulate his point of view while guarding his own linguistic background. Morgan began the discussion by stating her own belief in the importance of knowing mainstream English, and although Al didn't disagree—indeed, he repeatedly referred to mainstream English as "correct English"—he was eager to explain that his relatives had not consciously chosen their language:

> Al: ... you know, the parents, like say our parents or my grandparents, were, uh, not really taught the correct English, um, really, let it go, now, I don't know how to, I don't know how, uh, they come up with this, you know, 'bout how I feel bad for, you know, kids that come up talkin' black English. They weren't taught ... their parents weren't taught any other English ...
>
> Morgan: Ok, but I think one of the points she's makin' ... she feels it hurts her to hear children, who are young black children, who by virtue of the fact of their blackness, and the culture and society that we live in, are gonna be disadvantaged against already, but I think she said it hurts her to hear them talk black English, knowing that maybe that's all they're gonna learn, I mean, the way I look at it ...
>
> (Al starts to say something, but Morgan overrules, keeps going.) Morgan: The way I look at it, the way I look at it—let me, I'm sorry (addresses this to Al, then laughs)—I look at black English, like another language, like you can look at Spanish, or you can look at French, or you can look at anything. But when people come to the United States, they need to learn Standard English, because that's, that's what's gonna to make you marketable.

Keenly aware of the stigma so readily attached to his people and their language, Al leapt somewhat awkwardly to defend his family's use of black English—a language they couldn't help but speak, never having been taught "the correct English." Difference—his difference—had been highlighted in a negative way, and he scrambled to respond. Only a few moments later, when Morgan spoke of how she switched "dialects" across various settings, did Al begin to adopt a more contentious tone:

> Morgan (quickly, animated): When I'm ... hanging out with people with whom I work ... my uh, speech, uh, and my dialect is completely different, and then when I'm here in school ...
>
> Al: (trying to interrupt): It depends on ...
>
> Morgan: ... my dialect is completely different ...
>
> Al: I'm sorry, but it depends on who you grew up around.
>
> Morgan: That's true, but I mean, you grow up around a system of people, and a system of behaviors, that are just inherent to the group, and that language and, um, slang terms ...
>
> Al: The more black people you grew up with, the more black English you're gonna come up with.

> Morgan: That's exactly it, see I didn't grow up with a lot of black people, so I don't have the control of a lot of black English ...

Morgan concluded the discussion by noting her resentment when people charge that her use of mainstream English renders her somehow "less black." When the group met again, she made a similar speech: "just how we said that the other day," she began, "like how in the hell can anybody tell me that I am not black, or that I do not act black. What does acting black mean? You know what I mean?" Al, who had been silent all hour, suddenly spoke up: "Talkin' like I do," he responded. "Talkin' like you do?" said an incredulous Morgan, "You're talkin' like me!" A testimony to unresolved misunderstanding, these would be the last words Al and Morgan exchanged as group leader and student.

In a final interview, Morgan was uncomfortable talking about her falling-out with Al, emphasizing that while they had "personality types that just have a natural conflict," they continued to exchange cordial greetings. When I played back the tape of their discussion of black English, however, she provided indications of a lingering miscommunication. What Al was trying to say, she surmised, was that "for years and years, you know, black people weren't allowed to come to school, so, you know, [they were] just systematically denied the opportunity to buy into the mainstream culture." As she listened to Al charge that "acting black" means speaking the way he does, Morgan mused that perhaps he was feeling ashamed of his language and the attendant assumption that "because you use black English ... you're dumber." Although saddened by Al's rejection, Morgan was inattentive to the possibility that Al had ambivalent feelings about "buying into the mainstream culture," or that he felt both proud and defensive about his home language.

Kalie. Al's move was accomplished with quiet tact—Ms. Martin explained to Kalie that Al wished to switch to her group, and one morning she casually asked him if he'd like to join them. That morning, he shared a paper he'd written about how he'd been stereotyped since coming to college—by the students who'd assumed he was a gangster, by local whites who seemed to regard him as a suspicious outsider, and by Morgan, who had "tested" him to see if he was "as intelligent at the normal white student":

> [She] always look on me to have an insight on every topic that comes up in the adjunct hour. Because I'm the only black student in the group doesn't mean that I am always going to have something to say, half the time I don't feel like saying anything so I don't but my group leader still calls on me. It's not a problem that I can't handle but sometimes you have so much to worry about you don't want to be bothered. When I do give my insight I make sure that I make her think of me as an exception to the dumb, gangster stereotype that has been put on me.

Kalie listened politely and made a few suggestions about surface structure, but avoided comment on the content. Only later in the day, when she ran into

me in the campus library, did she express her amazed outrage at this essay "trashing group leaders."

In an end-of-term interview, Kalie admitted that she'd initially been concerned that Al might develop "an aggressive attitude, or an attitude problem against group leaders," that she'd regarded his sharing of this essay as a move to "test" her. "I feel like I passed the test," Kalie added, noting that she had no misgivings about her interactions with Al aside from the fact that she "didn't have enough time." "He liked my comments," she noted repeatedly, "it's not that he didn't trust me"; and yet, she acknowledged, there was a certain distance, something that didn't quite click.

From the beginning, Kalie had trouble remembering even the most basic facts about Al. Another African-American student, Frank, already belonged to her group, and for the duration of the semester, she habitually got them mixed up: "I always want to call 'Frank' 'Al,'" she remarked one morning to the three fair-skinned members then present, adding, with marked facetiousness, "I wonder why." Even in an end-of-term interview, Kalie was confused about who was who, assuming at first that Al's apparent lack of motivation had to do with a commitment to athletics: "I think part of it," she mused, "is that he grew up with athletes being really important in his family. And he's in athletic teams now, and he misses ... " I interrupted to ask which teams she thought Al played on: "I don't remember exactly," she replied, "he's like on baseball and basketball, something like that. He's like on a couple." In fact, Frank played on the campus baseball team and had often used away games as an excuse for missing Kalie's group; Al did not play sports.

Kalie had a tendency to engage in extended monologues, and Al often found himself staring blankly into space during the small-group hour. It would become a pattern: as Kalie grew impassioned and loquacious, Al would drift into silent daydreams, interrupted only by her eventual order to "wake up!" "He never quite joined the group," Kalie admitted:

> Even though he'd show up, he like would sit a little further away sometimes, or he'd sit at the table and be kinda half asleep ... And I think part of it is, that, you know, it's not that he ever had a problem, but I think that the enthusiasm and participation in the group, you know, lots of it gets going in the beginning and carries forward ... People that come in later, it's a little harder to get them involved.

Indeed, Kalie and the other group members clearly regarded Al as an outsider—and although they were cordial in his presence, they often took advantage of his absences to engage in private asides. During the semester, Al tried out three different hairstyles, and the other group members often joked about his changing image as they observed him from across the room. Al was absent when the group talked about writing reviews of the film "Do the Right Thing," and one student felt free to remark that the way the characters spoke "is so uneducated"; when Kalie asked who the students thought might enjoy the film, another white student responded, "a black person." Al was also absent a few days later, when the group discussed the pros and cons of capital

punishment. In arguing the efficacy of life imprisonment, Kalie invoked an argument that Al may well have regarded as racist:

> My thing is, if you imprison somebody, they're gonna have to live with that the rest of their lives. And if they're not big black guys, they're gonna have big black guys after their asses.

On the one hand, Kalie wished to be supportive of Al's struggles, even pausing in one of our conversations to applaud the fact that he'd "stood up" to Morgan:

> And I really think that makes a difference with um, the way ethnics, especially blacks—blacks even more than Hispanics sometimes—are treated in schools. That you need to be able to stand up, be assertive, and stop something if you see it as being wrong. And I think that came up in his writing in some ways, too.

On the other hand, she was concerned about Al's strong ethnic identification, privately criticizing his decision to join an African-American fraternity. Kalie also saw evidence of separatism in Al's tendency to share his rough drafts only with Frank:

> He and Frank—real friendly, both of them, but, but going and sitting at another table right next to us, you know ... It's not, you know, he's not aggressively, you know, black-groups-only type of situation ... he's not there yet. But I do see that potential a little bit. And I think that could hold him back, because, um, I have seen that sometimes where people get, you know, a slightly bitter, you know, pro-themselves, pro-their-group attitude, the rest are the enemy. And if they're not careful, they won't do as well in school, because they spend all their time playing ... because if you think about how many people wind up getting involved in groups that they really don't, that don't help their academics, that wind up separating them from the mainstream academia.

Besides the attitudinal problems Kalie saw as inherent to cultural separatism, she also worried that if Al associated mainly with members of his own ethnic group, he'd never overcome some of the "grammar problems" in his speech and writing:

> Now that's been one of the problems, is that they're really, if their friends are in a certain social group—Al's not as bad as some—but Hispanics and blacks, sometimes they speak in colloquialisms among their friends and among their social groups, and if they don't you know, interact enough with other groups, they're not really gonna be able to speak better, and speaking better does make a big difference in how they can see their mistakes in their writing.

While "not as much" a problem with Al, Kalie had noted the "heavy accent that comes through" in the writing of some of her other African-American students—and though she allowed that "it's real colorful writing sometimes," she cautioned that "you know that grammar is not going to make it, or cut it, you know, when you get into certain teachers that are going to demand a

higher academic style. And academic English is not spoken English—it's not even our spoken English."

Al's Perspective on the Adjunct Component

Ironically, although Kalie seemed to attach the far greater stigma to his cultural and linguistic background, Al much preferred her to Morgan. When I asked him for a progress report after his initial meeting with Kalie, he produced a verbal collage of negative recollections about Morgan, various worries that extended outside the context of the small-group sessions, and, finally, a few upbeat comments about Kalie:

> It's not like I have a quick attitude or anything, but (begins to sound worn thin) when I hear about things, you know, happenin', like people callin' me late at nighttime and it's somethin' happenin' back home, you know, and, when I come in, to constantly get bothered, and bothered, I really, you know, I really just can't take it, you know? (shakes head, sighs in exasperation). You know how someone constantly nags you, and you just feel like you're just breakin' on that person, but, you know (laughs) you try not to ... Now, ok, Kalie (upbeat). Um, I like, just by havin', just by bein' with her one day, you know, I think that she'll make, she'll make a great group leader for me.

Even at the end of the semester, Al had little more to say about Kalie. She'd been an effective group leader, he observed, although somewhat prone to "goofing off":

> Kalie's a good leader, I like her, you know, when we talked about the essays, but when people would get her, when they'd sidetrack her, then she'd be sidetracked out of class. But other than that, you know, everything was fine.

Al admitted, however, that the three-hour weekly time commitment had begun to seem excessive—that not enough was getting accomplished in the sessions, and that he'd gradually lost interest. While he'd begun the semester by attending Morgan's group fairly regularly, his attendance dropped markedly after he switched to Kalie's group. Overall, he was present for only 18 sessions and absent for 15, an attendance record well below the class average.

Since Al came only occasionally to Kalie's group and almost never shared his writing with her, his praise of her work had a rather empty ring—an attempt, perhaps, to prove that despite his falling-out with Morgan, he could be easygoing and adaptable. Perhaps, too, he'd established a comfortable distance from his new group leader, his lack of criticism more a sign of detachment than real satisfaction. As I played back audiotapes of some of his conversations with Kalie, he likewise pronounced each interaction "fine." When I asked if he'd wished the group had had more to say about his essay on stereotyping, he replied, "No, I don't, you know, I'm not the type person to ask anybody to do anything ... it was fine." Indeed, he added, he preferred that they *not* respond to the content of his writing: "Because when we start talkin'

about the ... I mean when people start talkin' about the content of somethin', you know, it gets uh, personal, and then, you know, a lot of things can go on."

His relationship with Morgan *had* "gotten personal," and "a lot of things" were still "going on" as he reflected back on his several weeks in her group. Al spoke angrily of Morgan's tendency to act "like she was my mother," but he had even more to say when I played back their discussion of black English:

> I really don't care what Morgan has to say. She acts like she know everything, but she doesn't, you know ... she's an African American, but she still don't understand the concept, of what I was tryin' to say ... the black English she know, wouldn't get her through, where I'm from, you know. You can tell that she's fakin' it.

Al took particular exception with Morgan's use of the term "dialect" to describe how she adjusted her linguistic style to fit various audiences:

> She always talk like she "could change her dialect"—well maybe she can change her dialect around her white friends, but from the moment I, I met her, you know, she, she tried to be in with me and everything, you know—talk to me like she, she know how to talk to me. You know, she just talkin', that's all, she just talkin'. She don't know—she don't understand.

Al was deeply offended at Morgan's implication that she already possessed the same sort of linguistic flexibility that he was struggling to attain:

> She was talkin' to me ... like she knew where, like she know where I was from—like she'd been there, she grew up there, but she left and went to college and now she know how to talk, you know, both ways. No ... You know, she can't come into my, my neighborhood talkin' the black English she knows, uh, you know, no time, you know. And that's how she was, just like she knew better, like she knew what was goin' on back home ... You know, if I just broke down and started talkin' to her, she wouldn't know what I was talkin' about.

Although Kalie held far more negative assumptions about Al's background and language than did Morgan, he somehow found her less threatening; culturally and linguistically different, she was also relatively uninterested and detached. Al could deal with her in a way that he could not deal with Morgan, who didn't seem to understand where their similarities left off, who didn't accept his proud self-reliance or fierce need for privacy. Even as Morgan tried to make contact and understand where he was coming from, Al was finding the gaps in her understanding unforgivable, especially where they led her to call public attention to his linguistic background.

By semester's end, Al had pulled back into a primary association with African-Americans from backgrounds similar to his own, speaking with renewed vigor of their cultural and linguistic bond. Some—Kalie and Morgan, for instance—would call it separatism, but Al was noticeably strengthened. Much of his vulnerability was gone, replaced by a cordial but marked detachment, and a profound lack of interest in programs campus whites had devised to ease his passage.

Beyond Good Intentions: Reconsidering "Boundaries"

As a growing array of literacy studies are informed by theoretic perspectives which consider the social genesis of written language (e.g., Bakhtin, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978, 1987; Wertsch, 1991), it has become almost a truism to say that one cannot understand particular teaching-learning encounters without first understanding their historical, cultural, and institutional matrices. This study was certainly guided by this premise, and it is hoped that this attempt to locate the interactions of these students and group leaders within a broader pattern of activities and meanings will encourage practitioners to enhance their own interpretive lenses, to problematize other programs, other practices. It is hoped, in other words, that these vignettes might encourage lively reflection and argument, that they might offer an incentive to move past the nervous sort of harmony I witnessed at this campus—where tensions and issues so often lurked beneath the surface of conscious consideration or public debate, existing along faultlines rendered treacherous by their continuing invisibility.

I began by evaluating this basic writing adjunct program in terms of Frederick Erickson's (1987) advice about converting politically charged "borders" into neutralized "boundaries," noting that while the program was often held up as evidence that equity students were receiving abundant help with writing, the group leaders too often responded in a manner which did little to depoliticize the differences between these students' linguistic and cultural frames and the mainstream expectations of the academy. I've also been moved, however, to think further about Erickson's metaphor, to wonder if ethnic "boundaries" can ever (should ever) be wholly neutralized—or if where competing frames of reference come into contact, a certain tension, a certain reciprocal pressure, just might be an expected and even desirable outcome. Perhaps the metaphor of boundaries is helpful only if we think of these points of meeting not as tidily dotted lines, but as the dynamism of earthen plates stimulated by energies deep within the earth, alternately pushing and pulling, exerting a mutual influence predictable only in its ubiquity. This portrait of one basic writing adjunct program is a multi-layered story of such conflict and flux—as institution, program, teacher and student engaged in an inexorable and disorienting process of change, of mutually shifting borders and boundaries, and, regrettably, of missed opportunities for shared learning and growth.

How accustomed we are to hierarchical thinking. To most of my informants, it seemed commonsensical to describe how campus equity policy had shaped programs like the adjuncts, how the English department had constructed the small-group supplement to its basic writing program, how administrators hired and trained staff, how the group leaders were influencing students' thinking and writing. It seemed commonsensical, in other words, to identify firm lines of demarcation, to sidestep the possibility of reciprocal influence—ignoring the lessons these students might provide,

the ways they might appropriately inform policy and instruction (cf. Dyson's [1990] critique of the metaphor of scaffolding). If our emerging diversity is to become a source of revitalization for our classrooms in particular and our society in general, we must loosen our grip on familiar oppositions—"mainstream" versus "ethnic," "teacher" versus "student," those long arrived and those just beginning.

But there's yet another packet to open: for what these students had to teach—about their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, about their current struggles with academic writing—was not steadily fixed, but itself dynamically changeable. Like the campus, these students were experiencing a Bakhtinian "interanimation" (1981, p. 275), undergoing a process of rethinking identities, of integrating new understandings, making sense of competing influences, moving towards revised, pluralistic definitions of self (cf. Cintron, 1991; Fischer, 1986; Wertsch, 1991). Peer teachers may indeed have possessed the much-heralded ability to lure them into academic conversation in a manner at once non-threatening and intellectually rigorous, but their success depended upon an ongoing and demanding effort to understand this complexity—this as they simultaneously grappled with the duality signalled by their very job label. These peer teachers needed encouragement, and lots of it—the kind of encouragement derived from immersion in a context which values such reflection, where faculty and administrators forthrightly wrestle with the many obstacles resting between good intentions and substantive action. Even more than specific programmatic improvements, these peer teachers needed an atmosphere in which inter-cultural sensitivity and conceptual rigor were the rule rather than the exception—an atmosphere rich in examples of what it means to approach students with firm theoretic grounding, with insight into individual difference, and with a caution born of the realization that we are all infected with the ethnocentric tendency to cast difference as deficit.

As more and more of us come to share the challenge before these peer teachers, the vicissitudes of their work might usefully inform our own reflections upon attempts to meet the needs of today's diverse students. Beyond maintaining an unflagging curiosity about the many complexities of our jobs, those of us who struggle to meet these demands must not only attend to the dissonances in our thinking but, indeed, cherish them for the clues they provide, the crucial questions they suggest. Most of all, those who would seek ways to structure programs differently, to select and train staff more effectively, must first come to see students more clearly—a prerequisite which can be satisfied only by looking first within, ferreting out those hidden attitudes and faulty assumptions that distort one's vision, and ultimately vex even the most idealistic agendas.

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